

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 750

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 7, 1997

Referred to the Committee on Resources

AN ACT

To consolidate certain mineral interests in the National Grasslands in Billings County, North Dakota, through the exchange of Federal and private mineral interests to enhance land management capabilities and environmental and wildlife protection, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. EXCHANGE OF CERTAIN MINERAL INTERESTS**
2 **IN BILLINGS COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA.**

3 (a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to direct
4 the consolidation of certain mineral interests in the Little
5 Missouri National Grasslands in Billings County, North
6 Dakota, through the exchange of Federal and private min-
7 eral interests in order to enhance land management capa-
8 bility and environmental and wildlife protection.

9 (b) EXCHANGE.—Notwithstanding any other provi-
10 sion of law—

11 (1) if, not later than 45 days after the date of
12 enactment of this Act, Burlington Resources Oil &
13 Gas Company (referred to in this Act as “Bur-
14 lington” and formerly known as Meridian Oil Inc.),
15 conveys title acceptable to the Secretary of Agri-
16 culture (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”)
17 to all oil and gas rights and interests on lands iden-
18 tified on the map entitled “Billings County, North
19 Dakota, Consolidated Mineral Exchange—November
20 1995”, by quitclaim deed acceptable to the Sec-
21 retary, the Secretary shall convey to Burlington,
22 subject to valid existing rights, by quit-claim deed,
23 all Federal oil and gas rights and interests on lands
24 identified on that map; and

25 (2) if Burlington makes the conveyance under
26 paragraph (1) and, not later than 180 days after the

1 date of enactment of this Act, the owners of the re-
2 maining non-oil and gas mineral interests on lands
3 identified on that map convey title acceptable to the
4 Secretary to all rights, title, and interests in the in-
5 terests held by them, by quitclaim deed acceptable to
6 the Secretary, the Secretary shall convey to those
7 owners, subject to valid existing rights, by exchange
8 deed, all remaining Federal non-oil and gas mineral
9 rights, title, and interests in National Forest System
10 lands and National Grasslands identified on that
11 map in the State of North Dakota as are agreed to
12 by the Secretary and the owners of those interests.

13 (c) LEASEHOLD INTERESTS.—As a condition prece-
14 dent to the conveyance of interests by the Secretary to
15 Burlington under this Act, all leasehold and contractual
16 interests in the oil and gas interests to be conveyed by
17 Burlington to the United States under this Act shall be
18 released, to the satisfaction of the Secretary.

19 (d) EQUAL VALUATION OF OIL AND GAS RIGHTS EX-
20 CHANGE.—The values of the interests to be exchanged
21 under subsection (b)(1) shall be deemed to be equal.

22 (e) APPROXIMATE EQUAL VALUE OF EXCHANGES
23 WITH OTHER INTEREST OWNERS.—The values of the in-
24 terests to be exchanged under subsection (b)(2) shall be
25 approximately equal, as determined by the Secretary.

1 (f) LAND USE.—

2 (1) EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT.—The
3 Secretary shall grant to Burlington, and its succes-
4 sors and assigns, the use of Federally-owned surface
5 lands to explore for and develop interests conveyed
6 to Burlington under this Act, subject to applicable
7 Federal and State laws.

8 (2) SURFACE OCCUPANCY AND USE.—Rights to
9 surface occupancy and use that Burlington would
10 have absent the exchange under this Act on its oil
11 and gas rights and interests conveyed under this Act
12 shall apply to the same extent on the federally
13 owned surface estate overlying oil and gas rights and
14 interests conveyed to Burlington under this Act.

15 (g) ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR ENVIRON-
16 MENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS.—All activities of Bur-
17 lington, and its successors and assigns, relating to explo-
18 ration and development on environmentally sensitive Na-
19 tional Forest System lands, as described in the “Memo-
20 randum of Understanding Concerning Certain Severed
21 Mineral Estates, Billings County, North Dakota”, exe-
22 cuted by the Forest Service and Burlington and dated No-
23 vember 2, 1995, shall be subject to the terms of the memo-
24 randum.

1 (h) MAP.—The map referred to in subsection (b)
2 shall be provided to the Committee on Energy and Natural
3 Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Resources
4 of the House of Representatives, kept on file in the office
5 of the Chief of the Forest Service, and made available for
6 public inspection in the office of the Forest Supervisor of
7 the Custer National Forest within 45 days after the date
8 of enactment of this Act.

9 (i) CONTINUATION OF MULTIPLE USE.—Nothing in
10 this Act shall limit, restrict, or otherwise affect the appli-
11 cation of the principle of multiple use (including outdoor
12 recreation, range, timber, watershed, and fish and wildlife
13 purposes) in any area of the Little Missouri National
14 Grasslands. Federal grazing permits or privileges in areas
15 designated on the map entitled “Billings County, North
16 Dakota, Consolidated Mineral Exchange—November
17 1995” or those lands described in the “Memorandum of
18 Understanding Concerning Certain Severed Mineral Es-
19 tates, Billings County, North Dakota”, shall not be cur-
20 tailed or otherwise limited as a result of the exchanges
21 directed by this Act.

Passed the Senate October 6, 1997.

Attest:

GARY SISCO,
Secretary.